



# God's Family **in ACTION**

- Great for Sunday school, VBS, and other summer programs
- Five large group sessions
- Five small group sessions for Kindergarten-Grade 3 and Grades 4-8
- Ten original dramas
- Large selection of crafts and activities
- Complete—no other resources to buy

**LEADER'S GUIDE K-8 SUMMER BOOK 4**

*God's Family* **in ACTION**



Grand Rapids, Michigan

Any questions or comments about this unit?  
We'd love to hear from you:

Faith Alive Christian Resources  
1-800-333-8300  
E-mail: [editors@faithaliveresources.org](mailto:editors@faithaliveresources.org)

RCA Children's Ministry Office  
1-800-968-3943  
E-mail: [childrensministry@rca.org](mailto:childrensministry@rca.org)

Presbyterians for Renewal  
1-502-425-4630  
E-mail: [office@pfrenewal.org](mailto:office@pfrenewal.org)

*Walk With Me* curriculum has been developed by Faith Alive Christian Resources in cooperation with the Children's Ministry Office of the Reformed Church in America and with Presbyterians for Renewal.

We are grateful to Carol Reinsma and Jessie Schut for their work in developing this unit of *Walk With Me*. We also thank April Hartmann for providing illustrations.

Unless otherwise indicated, the Scripture quotations in this publication are from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION, ©1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

*Walk with Me*

Grades K-8

God's Family in ACTION

© 2006 by Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America on recycled paper.

[www.WalkWithMeOnline.org](http://www.WalkWithMeOnline.org)

ISBN 1-59255-179-3

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

### Using Video in Your Group Session

Motion pictures and videos are fully protected by copyright. However, under the fair use copyright law, teachers in a not-for-profit setting may legally use *brief* excerpts for copyrighted materials in their class sessions. If you are uncertain whether film clips you plan to use are permissible under the "fair use" guideline, either consult a lawyer in your church or apply for a blanket licensing agreement from Christian Video Licensing International ([www.cvli.org](http://www.cvli.org)) for as little as \$45 per year.

# Table of Contents

How to Use This Book . . . . .	4
Tailoring Your Sessions to the Way Children Learn . . . . .	10
Sample Summer Celebration Program. . . . .	11
Session 1: God’s Family Grows	
Large Group Session . . . . .	16
Small Group Session, K-3 . . . . .	22
Small Group Session, 4-8 . . . . .	38
Session 2: Life in God’s Family	
Large Group Session . . . . .	52
Small Group Session, K-3 . . . . .	56
Small Group Session, 4-8 . . . . .	68
Session 3: Being a Working Family	
Large Group Session . . . . .	80
Small Group Session, K-3. . . . .	84
Small Group Session, 4-8 . . . . .	96
Session 4: Being a Caring Family	
Large Group Session . . . . .	108
Small Group Session, K-3 . . . . .	112
Small Group Session, 4-8. . . . .	124
Session 5: Being a Welcoming Family	
Large Group Session. . . . .	136
Small Group Session, K-3. . . . .	140
Small Group Session, 4-8 . . . . .	152
Large Group Dramas. . . . .	165
Small Group Dramas . . . . .	185
Songs . . . . .	197
Unit Projects . . . . .	221
Reproducible Pages . . . . .	239
Leader’s Evaluation . . . . .	271





# How to Use This Book

“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col. 3:16-17, NRSV).

The Memory Challenge of this unit sums up what it’s like to be part of God’s family—a family that is diverse and yet unified in Christ, a family that works together, cares about each other, and welcomes new members gladly.

The children you will be working with during this summer session live in a world where families are often crumbling or in distress. The social concept of family is transient and constantly changing shape and definition. But God’s family is permanent. The family of God reaches around the world, and its members are tightly held in bonds of love. This is a message of good news for children!

As you work with the children, they’ll get a taste of this kind of family life. Your summer session welcomes all, no matter how small or large, simple or sophisticated. Each is important in God’s eyes, and each has been given gifts and tasks. As children learn, sing, pray, play, laugh, and work together, they will grow in appreciation for God’s family in action.

## Goal and Theme

This course, with its unique format, makes a lively and exciting curriculum for your summer Sunday school; or you can use the five sessions for a great week of special summer ministry programs, such as vacation Bible school and other outreach programs.

Whether you choose a church school or summer ministry setting, the goal of this course is to teach children five New Testament stories that focus on God’s Family in ACTION as proclaimed in the book of Acts. We pray that leaders, children, and all who participate in these sessions and the summer celebration program will be delighted to discover the diversity of God’s family and eager to participate in that family’s actions. The overarching theme that shines through the lessons is this: Welcome to God’s family in action!

To support our theme, this book offers a variety of ideas and options for large group sessions, small group sessions, and a Summer Celebration Program. Use the ideas and options that work best with your church school, vacation Bible school, or other summer program.

Here are three possible formats for using the material:

### Format 1

2½-3 hours (typically used in VBS)

Large Group: 30 minutes

    Welcome (Hello, 5-10 minutes)

    Drama (Know, 10 minutes)

    Singing (10-15 minutes)

Small Groups: 45-60 minutes

    Hello (5 minutes, optional)

    Know (review, 5-10 minutes)

    Grow (10-15 minutes)

    Show (15-40 minutes)

Snack: 15 minutes

Games: 30 minutes

Closing: 15 minutes

(Transitions will take up about 15-20 minutes as children move between activities.)

## Format 2

45 minutes-1 hour (Sunday School with large group/small group format.)

Large Group: 20 minutes

Welcome (Hello, 5 minutes)

Drama (Know) and singing (15 minutes)

Small Groups: 25-40 minutes

Know (review, 5-10 minutes)

Grow (5-10 minutes)

Show (10-20 minutes)

In the two large group/small group formats described above, the Hello and Know steps are part of the large group activities. The small groups always include an optional Hello step and a Know step, which is a review of the drama.

## Format 3

45 minutes-1 hour (Sunday School in traditional small group format)

A typical session would use the following materials (from the small group session plans only):

Hello option

Know option (includes an optional script suitable for small groups)

Grow

Show

You may also want to schedule an extra practice time or two if your church is planning on having a Summer Celebration Program. See pages 11-12 for a sample program and tips for a successful gathering.

Finding time to do everything in this book will not be possible or desirable in most settings, so you will need to choose what is most appropriate for your group in the time frame you have available. **You will need one copy of this book for each of your leaders.** As purchaser of this book you are granted permission to photocopy the dramas and the patterns and activities on reproducible pages 239-269.

## Getting Started

Because these materials suggest a different format and approach than the regular *Walk With Me* units, you'll want to spend some extra time planning and preparing to teach these sessions. Although each church situation is unique, you may find some of the following suggestions helpful:

- In early spring, organize a small team to read through this book. They can review the session plans, dramas, and songs, and then choose what they think will work best for your church.
- After the committee makes its recommendations, recruit teachers, song leaders, accompanists, and drama participants.
- Consider which of the special props and centers (see box Make It Even Better, pp. 6-7) you'll be wanting to make or organize.
- Recruit volunteers who are willing to gather materials for your sessions. Give them plenty of time for this task (a month or two) since they will likely want to ask the congregation to save and/or gather some of the items.
- Schedule rehearsals for the drama team.
- If you're planning to use the Summer Celebration Program, schedule a single, final rehearsal for everyone involved in the program.

## Make It Even Better

Consider enhancing your program with the following props or ideas, which you'll want to plan ahead of time. All of these "extras" are optional . . . but will add spice and visibility to your program. These little touches are "icing on the cake."

**A family tree:** This could be a real or fake ficus plant, a dead tree branch in a pot of sand, an artificial Christmas tree, a carpet tube fitted with dowel branches, and so on. Branches should be labeled with a variety of characteristics: I have sisters, I have brothers, I like rap, I have a Nintendo, I like bagels, I have brown eyes, and so on. Children can add leaves, self-portraits, or other decorations to this tree if they arrive early.



**Nametags:** Make these by placing a disk on a backpack clip or caribiner slip. The disk could be made of craft foam or a yogurt container lid, or shrink-art plastic. Punch five holes on the bottom. Children can make beaded strings to hang from these holes for each day they attend.

You might want to hang nametags on the family tree (see above) at the end of each session to be picked up at the beginning of the next session if your group is small enough—and the tree big enough—so that all the tags can fit on it. Alternately, you could have smaller family trees, one for each small group.



Children can pick up their nametags as they arrive and add a new string; then wear it for the session. At the end of the unit, children can use these tags on their school backpacks.

**A picnic table:** The picnic table is used in all of the dramas. Carrying it onstage is the signal that the drama is about to begin.

**A guitar:** Have a real guitar or a cardboard cutout of the instrument available to signal musical activities.

**Action centers:** Tables or corners that feature various activities can be used pre-session for early arrivals, in spare time, or on days when inclement weather curtails outdoor activities.

- *World center:* Equip this area with maps and/or globes: a city map so kids can pinpoint where they live; world maps to show where all the different peoples of the world come from; globes for the same reason. Add books about different cultures as well, pictures of missionaries, information and pictures relating to a relief project you may be supporting financially.
- *Building center:* Provide rolled-up newspapers and lots of tape and glue. The children work together to make a structure. To make newspaper tubes, open four sheets of newspaper and place them in a stack. Roll the newspapers diagonally to form a tube.



Secure the tube with tape and trim ends to even out tube.

Challenge the children to work together to make a three-dimensional structure such as a swing set, tent, fort, cave, bridge between two chairs, and so on. Show them how to use the tape and glue to hold their structure in place.



Adapted from "Art Center: Creative Construction," from *God's Kids Grow, Leader's Guide*, © 2001, Gospel Light/Regal Books, Ventura, CA 93003. Used by permission.

- *Art center:* Cover tables with paper on which kids can doodle and add their monograms. Kids can make bookmarks to serve as prayer reminders from old maps cut up and glued to posterboard.



Equip art centers with Play-Doh, posterboard, glue, scissors, markers, hole punch, ribbon, beads.

- *Listening center:* Set up a place where children can listen to the unit CD through earphones.

**Banner:** Reproduce the logo for this unit (see reproducible page 239) on a banner to advertise your program to the community. The banner should be made several weeks in advance and displayed outside. This banner could be moved inside and hung over the stage area when the actual program starts.

## Large Group Sessions and Summer Celebration Program

The large group session materials include a drama for each week (see pp. 165-184) and songs to learn as a whole group (see pp. 197-220 and the unit CD).

Presenting a drama may, at first, sound intimidating, but these dramas are written in such a way that children, as well as adults, will enjoy performing and/or viewing them. Each drama will take about eight to ten minutes and requires six to twelve actors (additional actors are optional). The costumes may be as simple or elaborate as you like. You'll probably want middle schoolers or a team of older teens to play these roles (although adults would be fine too). Each drama offers ways to include younger children in non-speaking roles as well, if you wish to do so. Please see session I for more information.

The dramas and songs can be used not only for large group sessions but also for the Summer Celebration Program. You'll find a sample program along with ideas for organizing and producing it on pages 11-14.



## Small Group Sessions

Small group sessions are break-out groups that give you the opportunity to apply the story to the lives of your children and young teens. The small group format allows more personal interaction between a leader and a smaller number of children. Small group sessions include the following:

- *Hello*: This step is designed to catch the children's interest and get them thinking about the session's theme. **If the children have already been part of a large group gathering, you may wish to skip this step, or use the shorter Hello option.** (5-10 minutes)
- *Know*: The Know step tells the story. If the children have already viewed the drama in the large group session, you'll want to use this time to review the story with them (the first Know option is a review step.) If you did not participate in a large group session, either use the small group drama or another interesting way to present the story to the group (see the second Know option in each session). (10-15 minutes)
- *Grow*: This step will help children understand what the story means for their lives. (10 minutes)
- *Show*: This step guides children to respond to what they learned in this session. It includes options for activities and crafts that leaders (or the committee you appointed earlier) should carefully consider well ahead of teaching these materials. You'll notice that there are many suggestions; some are labeled Unit Projects because they are large projects that will use up to five sessions to complete. Others are labeled Session Projects—they take one or possibly two sessions to complete. (15-40 minutes)

Once you've decided which crafts and activities to use, you may want to appoint two or more volunteers (possibly parents of children in the group) who will spend the time needed to gather the materials, cut out patterns, and assemble all the items you'll need. Having a helper in the classroom is also a plus when doing crafts and other activities with young children.

We trust that God will use you as you share these stories about our completely reliable Lord with the children.



Small group leaders may want to send a short letter to the families of the kids in their group at the beginning of this unit. Explain what these five sessions will be like and invite families to share in the experience by praying for you, talking about the stories with their kids, helping out in your sessions, and/or attending the Summer Celebration Program (if you plan to have one).

### Terrific Tees

Welcome Wear (T-shirts or caps that kids decorate with symbols or other designs) is one of the Unit Project ideas suggested for this summer session. If you do not choose to use that project suggestion, you might wish to make the summer program extra-special for the children with ACTion Tees. Order T-shirts for all participants printed with the logo for the unit program. (See p. 239 for a logo that can be screen-printed onto the shirts or printed on a program.)



You can order bulk T-shirts online, or from suppliers in your area. When ordered in large quantities, these T-shirts are quite inexpensive and make a great addition to a summer program. You'll also need to find a printer in your area to print them.

You could give the T-shirts to your staff on the Sunday prior to your program's beginning, and ask them to wear the shirts for each session. Children could either receive the T-shirts as part of registration, or at the end of the fourth session to wear at the closing program, or as a gift at the conclusion of the program to remind them of the themes they've been studying in this unit.

## Closing Large Group Session (15 minutes)

You may want to get the entire group back together for a time of singing and sharing after they've had their break-out small groups. If you're planning a Summer Celebration Program, you can use this time to review the songs that are part of that program. Kids can recite their Memory Challenge and can show their crafts or other projects to the entire group. Your time together can be closed with a leader-led prayer, with everyone joining hands.

## Forming Ministry Teams

"God's Family in ACTion" provides a great opportunity for many people from your congregation to become involved in summer outreach ministry. Here are a few suggestions for setting up teams of people from your congregation:

- *Planning Team.* Decides the dates and organizes the teams listed below. Assists and guides the various teams so that the main theme and vision of the VBS or other outreach program is apparent.
- *Music Team.* Chooses music, finds the music leader and musicians, selects music for the program. This material suggests a number of songs and includes them on a CD.
- *Publicity Team.* Creates fliers and distributes them throughout the neighborhood. Gets the word out about the location, date, and theme. Develops and prints a banner to place outside the church weeks in advance to advertise the program and dates.
- *Program Team.* Organizes the closing program. Sends invitations out. Possibly organizes an "after-program" event like an ice-cream social or a picnic.
- *Break-out Small Group Session Team.* Selects the ideas that will be used for the small group sessions, especially the craft and activity time.
- *Drama Team.* Organizes a drama team, assists in obtaining the necessary items for each drama, and presents the drama to the entire large group gathering. See session 1 for additional comments.
- *Decoration Team.* Decorates Action Central, the large group session area. See Making It Even Better (pp. 6-7) for ideas on this theme.

We encourage you to draw on the diverse gifts of your church members when you compose these teams. Involve as many people from the congregation as you can! Thinking about these stories and how the children will respond to them makes planning an exciting task.

# Tailoring Your Sessions to the Ways Children Learn

How do children learn? The answer to that question can be almost as varied as the children in your group. Some learn best through words. Others through music. Still others through nature or through movement.

Sessions in the *Walk With Me* curriculum try to respect the many ways children learn. *Walk With Me* sessions include a wide range of activities that speak to children with the following types of intelligence (based on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences). Within each session, the icons below highlight the learning styles represented by each activity. As you teach, you'll begin to get a sense for how the children in your group learn best. Children who are



## Word Smart

learn best through verbal activities (listening, reading, or speaking), including discussions, worksheets, writing, reading, storytelling, and word games.



## Number Smart

learn best by exploring patterns and relationships through activities such as problem solving, logical puzzles or games, making charts and graphs, or putting things in sequence.



## Picture Smart

learn best by visualizing concepts. These kids enjoy viewing maps, slides, pictures, videos, and diagrams; making jigsaw puzzles; and expressing their ideas with shape, color, and design.



## Body Smart

learn best by using their bodies, acting things out, using puppets, moving—anything hands-on.



## Music Smart

learn best through sound, music, and rhythm—playing musical instruments, writing their own songs and raps, listening to recordings, singing, and so on.



## People Smart

learn best through doing things with others, cooperating and working in small or large groups, role playing, conversations, brainstorming, and other interactive exercises.



## Self Smart

learn best by working independently through such things as writing in a journal, meditating, reading, and reflecting.



## Earth Smart

learn best through activities connected to living things and natural phenomena, through nature walks, examining plants and animals, nature experiments, and activities that focus on ecology.

—The ideas on this page are based on material from the following resources: *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* by Thomas Armstrong, © 2000, and a chart prepared by Donald L. Griggs, Livermore, California.

# Sample Summer Celebration Program

## God's Family in ACTION

### Welcoming Screen

If someone has taken pictures (digital or slide) during the meeting times, flash those across a screen before the program while people are being seated so that those in the audience can get a feel for the fun the children had during this unit. If the older children produced the "ACTion CD" as one of their activities (Unit Projects, p. 235), use the pictures that came from that production.

**1. Processional and Greeting:** "We Say Shalom"  
(*Children may use Praise Sticks made in session 5*)

ACTS Cheer (reproducible page 240, CD track 5)

Move directly into "The 'You Who' Song" (page 210, CD, track 6).

### 2. Opening Prayer and Introduction

**Leader:** Welcome to "God's Family in ACTION," the story of how God works with us to spread the good news of Jesus' love. We want to share with you some of the things that we have learned. It all started with an amazing event: the coming of the Holy Spirit.

**3. Reading:** The Holy Spirit Comes: Acts 2:1-12

**4. Song:** "The Family" (could also be accompanied by choreographed dance steps [Show, session 1, pp. 27-28] or puppet show [Unit Projects, p. 232])

*Note:* If both these activities have been part of your unit experiences, choose one to include here, and include the other at the conclusion of the program—see p. 17.

**5. Leader:** After that amazing experience, things were never the same again for Jesus' followers. They began acting in spectacular ways. They began living like God's family.

**6. Reading:** Acts 2:42-47

**7. Recitation:** Memory Challenge: Colossians 3:16-17 (grades 4-8)  
and/or

"Spectacular Seven Cheer" (Session 2, p. 71)

**8. Song:** "Amigos de Cristo" (children teach the song to the congregation)

**9. Leader:** Not only did ordinary people begin living and acting differently . . . ordinary people also showed God's power and love in extraordinary ways. Our drama group wants to share one of the acts in God's family with you now.

**10. Drama:** "Get Ready, Get Set, Go!"

(End drama at this line, which occurs after Larry is healed, from the chorus of "Silver and Gold Have I None": "He went walking and jumping and praising God . . .")

(Or, if you prefer, have a group of children perform the optional session 3 small group drama, "Healing Action," found on p. 190.)

### 11. Reading

**Leader:** And that's not all that happened. God's family just kept on growing as God did miraculous works through his followers.

(Leader then reads Acts 9:32-42.)

**12. Song:** “Tell It!”

**13. Leader:** There’s more good news: God told his family not to keep the good news about Jesus to themselves. They were to go out into the world and welcome all to God’s big family.

**14. Meditation on Acts 10**

(or, Peter appears on stage and tells the story of his vision)

**15. Alphabet Action Acrobatics Team presentation (optional)**

**16. Closing Prayer Song:** “My Friends, May You Grow in Grace”

**17. Postlude:** The Family/Puppet Show *or* The Family/Interpretive Dance



## Additional Program Ideas

Having a Summer Celebration Program is a great way to help focus your church's attention on Jesus and sharing the good news. This program can be used during a Sunday service or for a special weeknight "bring-a-neighbor" service. Read through the sample program (pp. 11-12) and use it as a guide to making your own unique program. (You may want to use the logo on p. 239 for a program cover.)

Here are a few additional ideas.

### Scripture Readings

- Your middle schoolers and younger children who are good readers can nicely present this part of the program. Consider using simplified English versions such as the NIV or the New Living Bible. *The Message* could also be used for one or two of the readings.
- Children can recite their Memory Challenge in unison. Note that the younger children learned only the first part of this passage.

### Singing

- During the program we suggest using the songs the children have learned (the audience sings "Amigos de Cristo" just before the dramatization of "Get Ready, Get Set, Go!"). All the songs the children sing are on the CD that's part of this resource. Please see the list on page 14 of optional songs that you may want to substitute; these songs are also on the CD. Even if the children know all the songs by the last session, you may still want to plan an extra practice session, perhaps on a Saturday or evening. Having a closing song time during your weekly or daily sessions will also give kids time to practice the songs.
- You may want divide up the songs; for example, have kids in K-3 sing a few of the songs and older kids sing the rest. Then, at the program, there would be different groups singing the songs, instead of one mass choir singing them all. Another option is to have boys learn some songs and girls learn others.
- If the children made Twig Twirlers in session 5 (p. 158), it would be great to use them during the processional into the sanctuary.

### Drama

- Presenting one of the dramas from this course is bound to delight your audience. We suggest using "Get Ready, Get Set, Go!" (see pp. 173-176). Of course, if you think one of the other dramas would be more effective, feel free to substitute.
- The drama can be presented by your drama team or by other adults, young adults, and middle schoolers. Check the drama for places where younger children can be involved in non-speaking roles. Costumes, props, and sets can be as simple or elaborate as you like. Read through the suggestions given at the beginning of each drama.

## Stage Direction Ideas for the Sample Program

**Pre-processional:** Have the children line up in the back of church.

**Processional:** All of the children enter the worship space from the back singing "We Say Shalom" or the alternate, "Ha La La La." The younger children may use their Twig Twirlers made in session 5.

**Formation in Front:** Have the children line up in front. They can be spread across the front of the worship space in a single row or several rows. (During practice time, assign kids a special spot or area where they will be standing when they sing during the program.) As soon as they are assembled, proceed with the Action Cheer and "The 'You Who' Song" as you have practiced it in your large group assemblies.

**Special Features:** If your group made Welcome Wear, have children wear their shirts or caps to the program. If they made quilts, banners, or posters in the optional Show projects, display those projects. Banners or quilts might be carried in the procession and then displayed to the side of the room. You'll notice that the program includes displaying or

performing the cheers, chants, and actions that the children may have learned during this unit. If your group did not learn any of these optional activities, the program will still be complete if you omit them.

**Singing:** If you are planning on having all of the students singing all of the songs, they may all stay in front of church. If smaller groups are singing certain songs, have those who are not singing stay seated until it is their turn to sing.

**Opening Prayer:** Have one of the older kids open with prayer. He or she can thank God for the Bible and the stories that they are going to share, as well as ask God's blessing on the program.

**Scripture Reading:** Have the children who are reading move to a visible location. Microphones may or may not be necessary, depending on the size of your group and/or worship space.

**Transition to Drama:** After singing "Amigos de Cristo," have the kids exit the worship space to make room for the drama or have them sit down. Have the accompanist play music during this transition time.

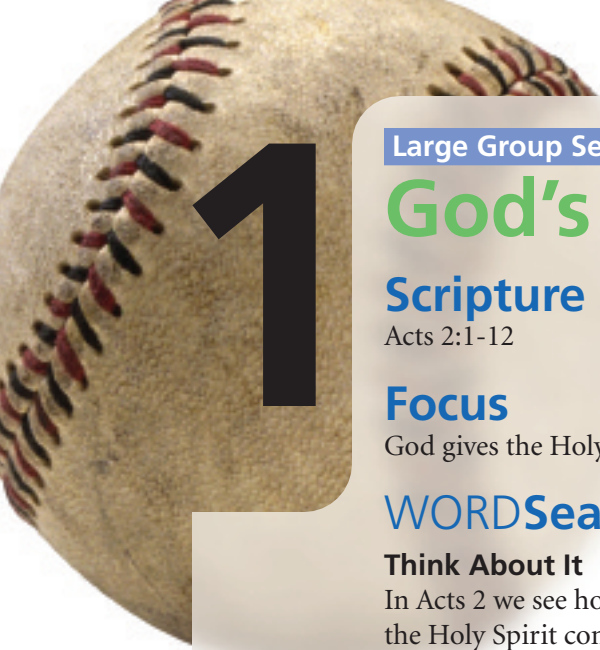
**Drama:** The drama team will need to set up and take down quickly. They may need some extra stage hands to help them. Sets and props do not have to be elaborate; perhaps partial set-up can be completed ahead of time. Have the accompanist play music during the transition time before and after the drama.

**Transition to Meditation:** Following the song "Tell It!" the children should be seated. The pastor then leads the balance of the worship time, or you may wish to have Peter briefly tell the story of Acts 10 as a first-person narrative.

### Optional Songs

You may want to substitute some of the following songs for those we suggest for the program. These optional songs are listed in the large group sessions and are included at the back of this manual and on the CD.

- "We Are Your Children" (Alternate to "The Family"), pp. 200-201
- "Ha La La La" (Alternate to "We Say Shalom"), p. 207
- "Children of the Lord" (Alternate for "Amigo de Cristo"), pp. 216-217



## Large Group Session

# God's Family Grows

## Scripture

Acts 2:1-12

## Focus

God gives the Holy Spirit to grow the church, God's family.

## WORDSearch

### Think About It

In Acts 2 we see how Jesus fulfilled his ascension promise: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses . . . to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The Holy Spirit has been on earth from the beginning: "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Gen. 1:2). The prophets spoke by the same Spirit (1 Sam. 10:10; Isa. 61:1). And it was the "Spirit of God" who descended on Jesus at his baptism (Matt. 3:16). What's new about Pentecost is that the Spirit is now *poured out on all believers* (Acts 2:16f.). In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit would equip a priest here, a prophet there, enabling them to do God's work. And God's family, the church, was bottled up in the tiny nation of Israel. But now, in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, the Spirit's power spills out over every boundary to cover the globe. God's family expands like never before. Not every believer will be able to do miraculous signs. But every believer is gifted as God's prophet, priest, and ambassador.

God's Spirit gives us

- faith, making us believe in Jesus;
- love for God, each other, and the world;
- a place in God's growing family, the church;
- hope in Christ's return;
- gifts that help us do God's work in the world.

### Pray About It

You need not pray for a flame on your head as you teach this lesson. Instead, pray for the fire of Christ's love burning in your heart. That will be more than enough.

Deep wonder pervades Pentecost. It amazes the crowd of spectators (2:12). Signs and symbols identify the Spirit's coming. There's the sudden sound of a violent wind—a symbol used often in Scripture for God's Spirit (Ezek. 37:9-14; John 3:6-8). The witnesses see what "seemed to be tongues of fire" (Acts 2:3) resting on the head of every believer. As with the burning bush (Ex. 3), fire represents God's direct presence.

Along with these signs came the ability to speak in other tongues. This was a gift of proclamation, not unintelligible languages, for all the people in the crowd heard and understood what Jesus' followers were saying. Peter stood up and explained what had just happened. He urged his listeners to "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord

### Tell About It

Don't be too concerned if your kids have a hard time grasping the mysterious ways God's Spirit works within us. Just tell them that the Spirit gives us the faith we need to believe in Jesus and the love to celebrate the uniqueness of each and every member of God's family.

our God will call” (2:38-39). From now on God’s family not only tolerates that diversity but welcomes and celebrates it.

As the first dramatic result of the outpouring of God’s Spirit and the proclamation of the good news, three thousand people were baptized in a single day. The New Testament church was born of water and the Spirit. Across the globe that miracle has continued to roll on ever since, as thousands are still brought into God’s family through the words and deeds of everyday folks like you and me.



The activities you do in the large group setting are basically the Hello and Know steps of a traditional *Walk With Me* session. You start by welcoming and engaging children, doing community-building activities, and whetting their appetite for the story (Hello) and follow this with a drama (Know). The suggestions in this large group session assume that you’ll be preparing and presenting the drama on page 167 to children and young teens. Afterward they’ll respond to it in small groups. If you choose not to present the drama, an alternate storytelling method is found in the Know step of the small group sessions (see p. 25, Pentecost Action). See pages 4-5 for possible schedules and variations.

## Planning the Session

This first session is important for setting the tone of the whole week. Be sure that your props and centers (if you are using them—see *Make It Even Better*, pp. 6-7) are prepared and ready to be used. Advance attention to these details will add to the success of this unit.

As large group leader, you are also in charge of presenting a drama, the story of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, to all the children in your church school or VBS—from kindergarten to eighth grade. That’s quite a challenge! The tips found below under the heading Drama will help you prepare. The drama will take about ten minutes.

You (or a volunteer with musical gifts!) will also lead a time of singing. Singing is a great community-building activity, and songs are an important part of the program. We suggest that you spend about ten to fifteen minutes singing together during the large group time if you are using this material for VBS. Here’s a list of the key songs for this unit, which will be sung at every large group time:

“The Family” (unit theme song), p. 197; CD, track 1

“We Say Shalom” (greeting song), p. 204; CD, track 3

“The ‘You Who’ Song” (part of the ACTION chant), p. 210; CD, track 6

“My Friends, May You Grow in Grace” (parting song), p. 213; CD, track 8

These songs will be introduced as responses to specific sessions:

“Amigos de Cristo” (session 2), p. 215; CD, track 10

“Silver and Gold Have I None” (session 3), p. 218; CD, track 12

“Tell It!” (session 4), p. 220; CD, track 13

Other songs are also included on the CD as options to these songs. Some of them may be introduced in the small group sessions.

See the ideas in the box titled “Introducing a New Song” (p. 20) to help you introduce and teach these songs to the children, and to use them in a meaningful way.

If you’re going to be presenting a Summer Celebration Program, you may want to use part of the large group session to help the children prepare. You’ll find suggestions for program planning on pages 13-14.

# Welcome

## Time

10 minutes

## Materials

- Songs: “The Family” (p. 197; CD, track 1)
- “The ‘You Who’ Song” (p. 210; CD, track 6)
- ACTS Cheer (reproducible page 240; CD, track 5)
- CD player



Have the theme song “The Family” (CD, track 1) playing in the background as children enter. Warmly welcome the children to “ACTION Central.” Assure them that they’re going to have a great time discovering what it’s like to be part of God’s growing and diverse family. Take some extra time to introduce leaders and helpers, and to point out the locations of bathrooms.



As small group leaders are introduced, each leader may wish to hold up a distinguishing prop—perhaps different colored flags, or different tools such as a hammer or saw, or a unique hat. When children are later instructed to follow their leader to their small groups, they may not remember their small group leader’s name or face, but they’ll likely remember and identify the prop.

This is a good time to introduce the Family Tree (see How to Use This Book, p. 6). Children may add their names to the branches of the tree. Also, the nametags the children received at registration will be hung up either on this tree, or on a tree in their small group meeting room, at the end of every session, to be picked up again the next day (see How to Use This Book, p. 6). Each day as they arrive, children can attach a new ribbon to their tag too.

You’ll also want to point out and briefly introduce the centers set up around the room, if you are using them. If children arrive early, the centers will be there for them to explore.

The theme for today’s session is *diversity*: God’s family in action is a big family made up of peoples from many times and places, of different ages, shapes, and sizes, with a huge collection of abilities. The ACTS Cheer and “You Who” song invite children to take an active role in the family of God, who welcomes them all and wants them to be his children.

Teaching the cheer and the “You Who” song will comprise the rest of this introductory step. You may wish to make a PowerPoint slide or transparency of reproducible page 240 and show it for this first time to help children learn the cheer. Have copies of the reproducible sheet available for volunteers to demonstrate the actions of the cheer quickly and sing the song for the children. Then have them repeat the presentation, this time stopping after every line so kids can stand and imitate and repeat the lines. Be sure children are able to spread out so they can twist their bodies into different shapes and do the suggested actions.

Following the last line of the cheer (Come, all of you who . . . *beckon*), move directly into “The ‘You Who’ Song,” CD, track 6.

After kids have practiced the cheer and “You Who” song, present the drama to your large group.

## Drama

Rehearsing and presenting a drama can be a fun and rewarding experience—both for the actors and for the people who view the drama.

### Actors

For this week’s drama, “The Spirit Starts the Action” (pp. 167-169) you will need at least six actors. If you have more available, you could use up to twenty-five as apostles and visitors



to Jerusalem! More is better if it means that children who wish to be involved can use their gifts by participating in the drama. Peter is a recurring character in these dramas, so try to have a lead actor who can be present for every session. The other characters in the drama for this session will be sign carriers, a crowd of visitors to Jerusalem, and apostles.

Consider finding a team of actors and begin working with them early. This could be a wonderful gift for your middle school group to offer to the younger children. Teens and adults can also be drama team members. Participating in the drama is a great way for a pastor to establish a relationship with children. And children of all ages can play non-speaking roles—in today’s drama, for example, they can be sign carriers and non-speaking visitors to Jerusalem as well as extra apostles.

### Costumes and Props

You’ll also want to begin thinking about costumes and props. A picnic table is a common denominator for all the dramas. When it is carried out on the stage, kids know that the drama is about to begin. You might wish to decorate your table with a red checkered tablecloth, as though it’s being used at a family reunion. Other props you’ll need for today’s drama are signs, a banner, loaves of bread, a string of Christmas lights, and sound effects of rushing wind (CD, track 7). Read through the script to understand their uses.

For costumes, we recommend keeping it simple: T-shirts labeled with names or decorated with appropriate add-ons are really all you need. Since Peter will be appearing in every drama, you’ll want to make his costume a cut above the others.

Simple costumes are suggested on the first page of the script for “The Spirit Starts the Action” (p. 167). The suggestions we offer are only that—suggestions. Use what you have available and what you can find to create your own costumes.



Each drama invites children to listen for cues and respond to them with a specified action. Put these words on cards (printed in **bold** in the dramas) and have a person who is following the script hold up these cue cards as an extra reminder for performing the action. Today’s cue words are **wait** and **act**.



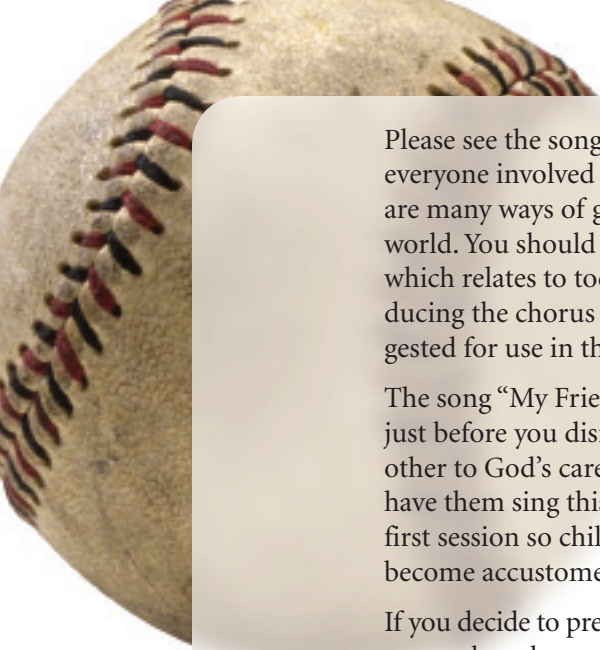
A typical rehearsal schedule might have the team rehearsing the first two dramas on the weekend before the unit starts, just to get a feel for the dramas and to begin working together as a team. The team may manage to loosely memorize their lines, but they should have freedom to improvise a bit as they go along. The remaining dramas can be rehearsed after each session, or in evening practices. To cut down time required from drama team members, consider forming two or more drama teams.

If your drama team doesn’t have time for memorization, reading the lines from scripts you provide is fine. Drama teams can still rehearse together even though they aren’t memorizing their lines.

No time or people for drama teams? You could present the dramas without rehearsal, “on the spot,” choosing your actors from the large group, distributing costumes and scripts, and walking your actors through the presentation. It won’t be smooth, but it’s certainly doable. You’ll need to allow more time than for rehearsed performances by a drama team. And plan to have at least one adult “stage manager” who assigns parts, distributes costumes, and, when necessary, acts as a prompter to keep the action moving. It would also help to have an older teen or an adult—perhaps a small-group leader—play the role of Peter.

## Singing

We recommend a time of singing after the drama. You may want to ask someone with musical gifts to lead the singing and teach new songs to the children during these five sessions. Photocopy the box Introducing a New Song (p. 20) and give it to that person. If you’ve decided to use a guitar as a cue for the singing time, be sure to introduce that idea now.



Please see the songs on pages 197-220 of this book. A great warm-up song that will get everyone involved is “We Say Shalom” (p. 204; CD, track 3). It reminds children that there are many ways of greeting each other, especially in God’s family that stretches around the world. You should also introduce the theme song “The Family” (p. 197; CD, track 1), which relates to today’s story and will be used in the other sessions too. Perhaps just introducing the chorus today to the children will be a good beginning. Both songs are suggested for use in the Summer Celebration Program.

The song “My Friends, May you Grow in Grace” (p. 213; CD, track 8) is a good song to use just before you dismiss to small groups. This prayer song has children committing each other to God’s care and grace. If you have a music team or volunteers to help, you may have them sing this to the group for the first session so children can hear it and become accustomed to it.

If you decide to present a celebration program, please be aware that the songs we suggest can be divided up between groups of children; for example, the children in K-3 might learn some of the easier songs, while those in grades 4-8 could learn the more demanding songs. Of course, if you prefer, you could have all of the children sing all of the songs.



Alternatives to the above songs are also included with this guide: “Ha La La La” (p. 207; CD, track 4) as a greeting song; “We Are Your Children” (p. 200; CD, track 2) as a theme song; “Go Now in Peace” (p. 214; CD, track 9) as a song of dismissal.

### Introducing a New Song

The way you introduce a new song is crucial. Of course you’ll want to know it well yourself. But you’ll also want to take time to think through how you’ll introduce it to your group. Here are a few ideas to keep in mind:

- Many kids learn mostly by rote and repetition. Listen to the CD or play the tune and encourage the kids to join in on one line or phrase at a time. You may want to start by teaching them a phrase that repeats often.
- Make up motions that may go along with simple words (*step, Jesus*) to help them remember the words.
- Be enthusiastic! Model your love of singing instead of being concerned about your performance.

—Sherry Merz, Music Editor

## Small Groups

After the drama and singing time, children will meet in small groups. Notice that we’ve included two session plans—one for children in kindergarten-grade 3 and another for children in grades 4-8. If your regular church school leaders are present, it’s probably best to have the children meet in their groups as usual; however, you could also choose to combine several groups together. Each small group leader will need to adapt the plan to the needs of his or her children.